



Living Healthy,
Working Well

Wellness Tips

Overcoming Procrastination

At one time or another, we've all procrastinated. The results of putting things off are all too familiar—wasted time, poor results, missed opportunities, self-criticism, and increased stress. Procrastination is simply allowing low-priority tasks to get in the way of high-priority ones. But the reasons for putting things off are often as complicated and unique as we ourselves are. Fear of failure, perfectionism, or having to deal with an uncomfortable situation often lead to procrastination. The following tips may help you to accomplish key tasks and become more productive:

Set clear, manageable, measurable goals

Make action statements such as, "I will work on my taxes for two hours each weekend in March" rather than, "I will finish taxes earlier this year."

Break up big tasks

A big project can seem overwhelming. Break it down and tackle it piece by piece. This works well with unpleasant tasks. Most of us can handle duties we dislike when we do them for a short time, in small amounts.

Use prompts

Write reminders to yourself and put them on the mirror, refrigerator, front door, in the car, etc. The more often you're reminded, the more likely you'll follow through with your plans.

Avoid jumping to the "catastrophe" conclusion

If you assume you will fail at a task before it starts, you are more likely to procrastinate. Avoid crisis language like "this project is impossible," or "it can't be done." Instead of worrying about all of the "what ifs," list what needs to be done, have back-up plans in place, and get the project started, one small task at a time.

Avoid the contingency play

Don't make the one task dependent upon the completion of another. For example—don't decide you must read all about fitness equipment before you can begin your exercise program.

Celebrate your successes

Recognize what you've done. This has a powerful effect on developing a "do it now" attitude. Don't minimize what you've done. Now is the time to be proud of yourself for what you've accomplished.

Call your EAP

Breaking free from old habits is tough. Following these tips can help you stop procrastinating. If you would like to speak with someone about your concerns, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can help. EAP counselors are available 24 hours a day, every day of the week, to provide confidential assistance at no cost to you. Information, self-help tools, and other resources are also available online at www.MagellanAssist.com.

